DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 171 163 FL 010 392

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TITLE Second Language Learning Objectives.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Modern Language Council (October 21, 1978)
JOURNAL CIT Alberta Modern Language Journal; v17 n2 p6-25 Win 1978-79

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication (Thought Transfer); *Communicative Competence (Languages); Cultural Context; *Educational Objectives; Grammar; Higher Education; *Language Instruction; Linguistic Theory; *Psycholinguistics; Secondary Education; *Second Language Learning; Semantics; *Sociolinguistics; Speech Communication; Syntax; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of foreign language learning, social communication, requires that experiences be simulated in the classroom. Before such simulations can be constructed, the teacher has to know what is involved when people communicate, in other words, the nature of the language act. This paper analyzes the situational, syntactical, and semantic components of a language act, based particularly on research by Papo Ferenczi and D.A. Wilkins. The situational components discussed are both sociocultural and psycholinguistic. The sociocultural elements (location, time, sequence of events, means of communication used, reference, status, degree of acquaintance, and needs) are more predictable by the participants than are the psycholinguistic elements (likely beneficiary, affective involvement and reciprocal roles). On the other hand, the psycholinguistic elements permit a greater imposition of the personality of the speaker. Because participants are not entirely at the mercy of the situation, they can often choose lexical and grammatical forms in terms of their own aims and the topics or "notions" they wish to speak or write about. The meaning that can be conveyed in the uttering of a sentence is analyzed under three categories: ideational, modal and communicative. An explanation of these types includes applications to possible situations in a foreign language class. (AMH)

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Second-Language Learning Objectives

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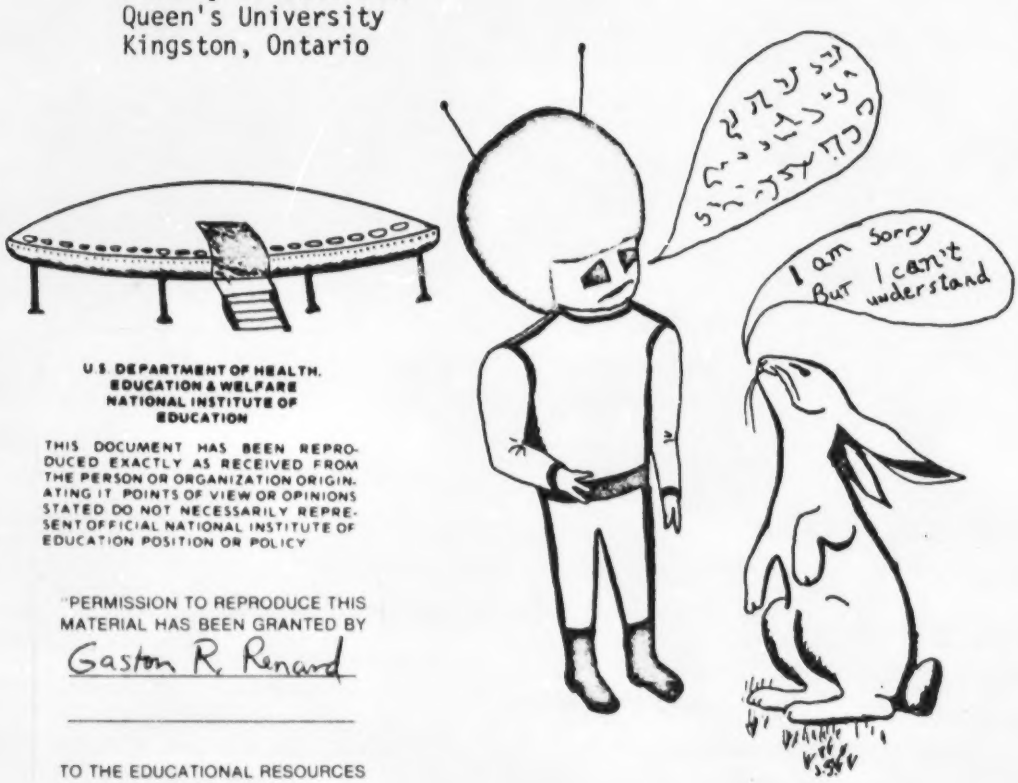

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The following is an edited version of the paper presented by the author at the Annual Conference of the Modern Language Council on October 21, 1978.

Why Learn Another Language? What's In It for You?

When Mark Twain first visited France, he tried out his school French on a Frenchman. The Frenchman didn't understand a word, but Twain was not easily repressed. "He said he couldn't understand me," wrote Twain later. "I repeated; he did not understand. He appeared to be very ignorant of French."[1]

Not all of us are able to joke about our first fumbling efforts to use the French we have learned at school, when we have to communicate face to face with French speakers in everyday situations. Before he went to France, Twain reckoned that any gifted person ought to be able to learn English in thirty hours (barring spelling and pronouncing, of course), French in thirty days and German, perhaps because it was often a compulsory subject in American schools in his day, would take thirty years. No doubt he would recommend thirty years for French after his early experiences with it. It is interesting that the Ontario Ministry of Education, in its plan for teaching French: *Teaching and Learning French as a Second Language*[2] published in 1977, suggests that 5,000 hours of instruction are required to reach the top level of bilingualism. At the usual rate of 120 instructional hours per year (40 minutes per day), students would require nearly 42 years to reach this level. No wonder immersion courses are increasing in popularity. Most learners of another language need some early tangible results for their endeavours.

It is fashionable to promote the learning of modern languages in schools by claiming extrinsic benefits: promises of jobs or more interesting types of work for bilingual people. These claims are often hard to fulfill. Who knows what requirements may be demanded by employers five or seven years from now? Others point to models of linguistic brilliance who have made good as diplomats, statesmen or even politicians. Certainly Bismarck and Trudeau found their multilingualism useful but, on the other hand, it does not seem to have hurt Churchill, De Gaulle or Kennedy to be monolingual. There are many who share the point of view of the Arkansas school superintendent who refused to allow modern languages to be taught in his state on the ground that, if English was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for the rest of us.

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[1] Mark Twain, *A Tramp Abroad* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1879).

[2] Ontario Ministry of Education, *Teaching and Learning French as a Second Language* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1967).

When one asks young people, "Why are you learning another language?", they usually reply, "Because my parents told me to." But a little deeper probing reveals that what they hope to get out of it, initially at any rate, is closer contact with people of their own age who speak the other language. Romance and adventure still appeal to most young people. Improved social contacts are the benefits they seek.

Social Communication — The Primary Objective

The need for social communication is common to both the Ontario Ministry of Education's outline of required levels of proficiency for young people learning French in schools and to the Confederation of British Industry's statement of the levels of proficiency in foreign languages required by Britain's industries.[3] The primary objective in *Teaching and Learning French as a Second Language* is that students should be able to participate in "simple conversations" and to function well in the community. The British industrialists require candidates at the elementary level to "participate in two-way communication on a question-and-answer basis within the range of everyday needs." At the intermediate level, candidates are expected to "get about in a foreign country without difficulty and have sufficient confidence in the language to take their place socially."

All other objectives, such as the ability to translate or to appreciate the literature and culture or to improve the learner's knowledge of the first language, stem from the primary objective of acquiring social, communicative skills. Indeed, without knowing everyday, banal usage, it is not possible to appreciate the writer's allusions or the poet's fresh treatment of the language.

In another important respect, learning a second language is similar to learning our first language: it is a creative act. When learning another language we tend to create an interlanguage: a non-standard form of speech that has elements of both the first language and the language being learned.

Allowing the learners to construct this interlanguage and use it in the classroom means that they will be able to communicate while they are learning. The conventional approach, particularly in the "core" or regular program, proscribes the use of interlanguage and treats it as "errors" rather than as "deviations"

[3]Conference of British Industry, *Report* (1967) Volume III.

from the standardized form. This approach "either stifles the learner's communication drives altogether or requires that the linguistically mature student becomes a little child, practising perfectly well-formed native-speakers' sentences which are, however, idealized and usually trivial."[4] Accepting the interlanguage enables the learner to proceed more quickly to the primary objective: the ability to communicate socially with speakers of the second language.

At a recent conference on bilingual education* André Obadia, co-ordinator of French programs for the Carleton County Public School Board in Ontario, mentioned that English-speaking children attending French immersion classes in the Ottawa area produced such interlanguage delights as "je faut aller" and "je veux pisciner." The questions that the latter raises about the child's confusion regarding the uses of swimming pools and toilets are best left unasked. But there was no confusion in either the child's or the teacher's mind about the need that produced that statement.

If we accept the learner's desire to acquire social communication skills, we may be led to advocate that another language can be learned effectively only in places where it is possible to meet and converse frequently with speakers of that language. There are many who claim that the learning of modern languages has no place in the classroom. While travel and frequent meetings with speakers of the other language are necessary ingredients for successful practice and evaluation of the learner's success, they are unfortuantely not available cheaply and in quantity. Why should the opportunity to learn another language be available only to a chosen few? It ought to be available to all pupils in our schools who are willing and capable.

Teachers and students must and can reproduce in the classroom the experiences and excitement of getting things done by communicating in simulated situations and by using the language being learned. These simulated situations can be enjoyed by beginners as well as by advanced language learners. Forty years to learn a language? Is it really necessary to spend so long to be told "Je ne comprends pas ce que vous dites"? If so, most

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[4]Jack C. Richards, *Social Factors, Interlanguage and Language Lerning* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1972), Publication B-34.

*Quoted by A. Obadia in a paper presented at the Conference on Bilingual Education held at O.I.S.E., Toronto, September 23, 1978.

people will protest that life is too short to learn another language.

What Does a Language Act Consist Of?

Analyzing communication gives similar results to those discoveries about speech that were made by Molière's Monsieur Jourdain. To his amazement he had spoken prose all his life and didn't know it, until he was told. We, too, may be astonished at the complexity of a "language act" - something we do, often mechanically, every day. Before we can effectively create practical and stimulating situations, roles to play and decisions to make for our students, we need to know what is involved when people communicate.

An essential part of communication is choice. When you talk to someone else, you are faced with a number of variables. You make a series of decisions on the basis of information you receive before you speak, or in reaction to the "language acts" you receive and the aspects of the situation in which you find yourself.

The applications of language in real situations are subtle and complex. Dubois' *Dictionnaire de linguistique* sums them up as "les charactéristiques de son utilisation (motivations psychologiques des locuteurs, réactions des interlocuteurs, types socialisés de discours, object du discours et cetera) par opposition à l'aspect syntaxique (propriété formelle des constructions linguistiques et sémantiques)."[5] Recent studies by linguists, sociologists and psychologists working under the auspices of the Council of Europe have cast more light on the nature of both the situational and the syntactical and semantic components of a language act. The analysis of these components which follows is adapted from the work of Papo and Ferenczi in *Un Niveau Seuil*[6] and D.A. Wilkins in *Notional Syllabuses*.[7] These and other studies indicate that the speaker's choice of

[5]J. Dubois et al, *Dictionnaire de linguistique* (Paris: Larousse, 1938), p.388.

[6]D. Coste et al, *Systèmes d'apprentissage des langues vivantes par les adultes - un niveau seuil* (Strasbourg: Conseil de la coopération culturelle du Conseil de l'Europe, 1976), pp.33 et seq.

[7]D.A. Wilkins, *Notional Syllabuses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

lexical, structural and phonological items is directly related to the context in which they are used and to the aims of the speaker.

The Situational Components of a Language Act

The components of a conversational situation are shown in Figure 1. This scheme attempts to take account of the fact that, while the actual choice of lexical items and structures is often unpredictable, some elements of the situation and, therefore, of the expression of meaning can be predicted more frequently than others. It is assumed that participants in a language act know beforehand the reasons for their intervention.

The socio-cultural components (1 to 8) in the scheme shown in Figure 1 are more predictable by the participant than are the psycholinguistic components (9 to 11). On the other hand, the psycholinguistic components permit a greater imposition of the personality of the speaker. A description of each component follows.

1. LOCATION

The location may be itself the object of the language act, as when directions are asked for or given or when the owner and prospective tenant discuss an apartment that is for rent.

The location may provide an immediate frame of reference for the language act as when workers in a plant discuss their tasks.

The public and private actions of the participants and the nature of the language may be determined by such locations as a doctor's office, a post office or a store. A user goes to such places for a specific purpose. The types of people one deals with there and the language acts to be used are highly predictable.

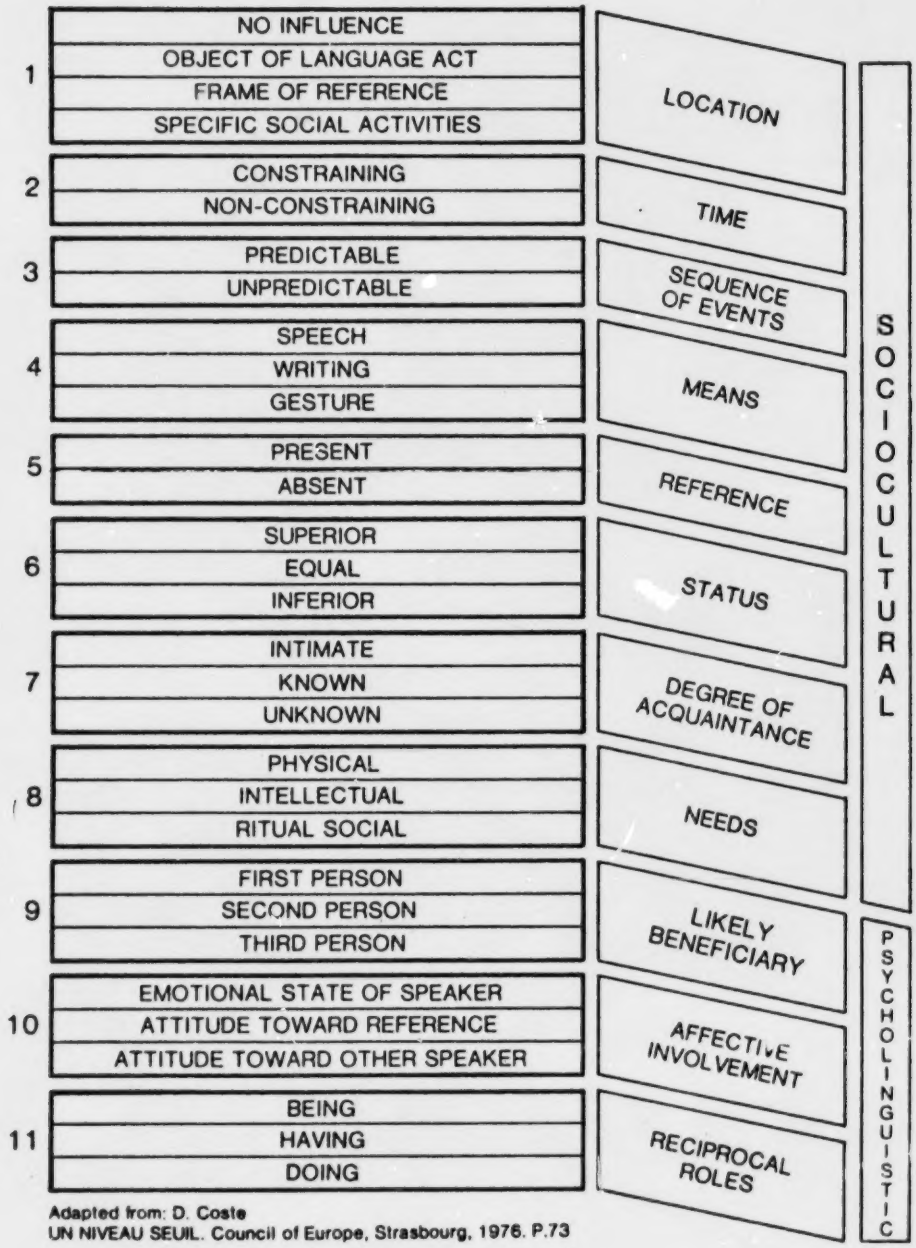
A fourth possibility is that the location has no effect at all on the language act. A discussion of a problem or event may take place in any context and be essentially the same.

2. TIME

A language act takes place in a period of time which, like the location, may have an influence on the choice of language or

Figure 1

COMPONENTS OF A LANGUAGE ACT SITUATION



Adapted from: D. Coste
UN NIVEAU SEUIL. Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1976. P.73

no influence at all. A person in a hurry to catch a train is not likely to use polite expressions or give lengthy explanations when buying a ticket. Two shoppers having a chat in the street do not usually feel the need to avoid repetition or to be briefly precise in their exchange.

3. EVENTS

The events that affect the language act are those that precede it as well as those that are the expected result of it. The sudden arrival of a vehicle just as an absent-minded person is about to cross the street may cause another person to utter a warning.

If the vehicle stops or turns away from the possible victim, the warning is premature and may give rise to the speaker offering apologies or explanations for "a false alarm." On the other hand, if a collision is avoided by the warning, then the speaker may enjoy profuse thanks or congratulations.

What happens or is likely to happen is more or less predictable depending on chance, the participant's experience and the amount of formalized behavior that is expected. At one extreme, "closed" transactions are highly predictable and may even be accomplished with no language act at all (one can buy a newspaper without uttering a word). A well-briefed lawyer will be able to predict quite accurately the responses that will be given to his or her questions in a court case. While praxiograms can be prepared for such events, there is always the possibility that the unexpected will occur. An official's peculiar interpretation, for instance, of rules and regulations may turn a predictable sequence of events into an unpredictable "open-ended" one that requires the use of a different set of functions than have been forseen, in order to reach a satisfactory conclusion to the language act.

4. MEANS

The type of language used to communicate is affected by the means of communication: the way the message is transmitted. The means may be oral. The speech may be uttered directly face to face or by telephone or by some audio medium such as a film or tape. The oral message may or may not be accompanied by gestures, or mime may be used alone. The message may be transmitted in writing either manually or by machine (typewriter, photo, or print).

5. REFERENCE

The reference or topic may be present or absent. The type of expression used to discuss the weather that one experiences at the time of speaking ("Hot enough for you?" - "Certainly is.") differs from that used to discuss the weather already experienced ("He agreed that it was a hot day").

The topic, in conjunction with the events, also has a considerable effect on the notions and choice of vocabulary to be used. Asking for the "loan" of a cup of sugar requires a different style of language to that used to ask for the loan of the neighbour's car.

The informative value of the reference may vary according to the location and other parameters of the language act: "It is going to snow," may be stated as a warning in the city or as an expression of delight in a ski resort.

6. STATUS

Halliday proposed that any language utterance has as one of its macrofunctions the marking of interpersonal relations of some type.[8] Each participant has a status in the eyes of the other. He may be superior, inferior, equal or neutral.

A person seeking information or help from another will usually have an inferior status and express himself accordingly if he wishes to obtain maximum satisfaction. This may be shown by kinesics and such devices as the use of polite forms and the conditional tense: "Excuse me, could you please tell me how..." In contrast, friends having a general conversation see each other as equals and tend to go directly to the point: "Say, how do you...?"

7. DEGREE OF ACQUAINTANCE

The choice of grammatical structure, style and meaning is affected by the relationship between the participants in a language act. Richterich distinguishes between:

(i) intimate (the participants in the language act know each other well and use familiar forms of speech when addressing each other);

[8] M.A.K. Halliday, *Explorations in the Functions of Language* (London: Arnold, 1973).

(ii) known (the participants have met or meet often but have not become close friends);
(iii) unknown (the participants have never met).[9]

The grey area between "intimate" and "known" is a familiar trap for English speakers juggling with the "tu" and "vous" forms in French, for example.

8. NEEDS

All communication between people is motivated by the desire to satisfy private or social needs. The way in which language is used is determined by the kind of need that the participant in the language act wishes to satisfy. The needs may be physical (food, lodging, comfort), intellectual (ideological, professional and leisure activities), or ritual or social (ceremony, conventional expressions of greeting, sympathy, etc.).

The distinctions between these needs are often blurred in usage. Speakers often attempt, for instance, to sublimate their personal views and create wider acceptance for them by such devices as the use of the passive voice or a third person agent ("I was told that...", "They say that...").

9. LIKELY BENEFICIARY

In keeping with the assumption that each participant in a language act knows the reasons for his intervention, the speaker will overtly or covertly anticipate that on a psychological level there will be one or more beneficiaries. The presumed beneficiaries may be one of the following subjects:

(i) the first person - I/we
(ii) the second person - you
(iii) the third person - he/she/they.

As a form of conventional usage, the third person subject may be offered as the beneficiary but it is, in fact, often a substitute for an implied first or second person ("The waiter has forgotten us" is equivalent to "I'm very impatient"). Similarly, the first person plural subject may be used as a substitute for the first or second person singular (The nurse's cheerful "How are we feeling today?", when asking after a patient's health, is a well-known example).

[9]R. Richterich, *Modèle pour la définition des besoins langagiers des adultes* (Strasbourg: Conseil de la coopération culturelle du Conseil de l'Europe, 1972).

10. DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT

The intensity of each language act varies according to the degree of emotional involvement of the participant. The affective state of the speaker is a reflection of the speaker's emotions. Three contributing factors are:

(i) the speaker's emotional state (whether the speaker is angry, frightened, frustrated, anxious, happy or joyful);
(ii) the speaker's positive or negative conviction about the topic (the degree of conviction the speaker feels about what he is saying);
(iii) the speaker's attitude towards the other participant(s) (as shown by the degree of sympathy, antipathy, equality or neutrality).

A PRIORI, most language acts of a "closed" transactional kind will be lacking in affectivity. However, latent feelings such as depression, frustration or impatience may be revealed by participants.

11. RECIPROCAL ROLES

Roles are often assumed by speakers in order to reflect their opinions of themselves. These roles may attempt to mask their true social identity in order to overcome or encourage certain value judgements that are based on institutional criteria or social prejudices. Thus a participant in a language act who feels uncomfortable in the status of "boss" or superior may assume a friendly, jovial, sympathetic personality when talking to an employee whose cooperation he seeks. Watch out for the boss who suddenly starts to glad-hand you and call you by your nickname!

Reciprocal roles indicate the effect the participants wish to have and may be classed as:

(i) being (both participants see themselves as equals);
(ii) having (one participant feels that he possesses more of a desired commodity or quality than the other);
(iii) doing (one participant demonstrates skills or aptitudes in order to show superiority over the other).

The range of roles adopted by participants depends on their experiences, their capacity for observation, their imagination and their ability to act in a variety of social situations.

Situation and Choice of Language

A participant in a language act is not entirely at the mercy of the situation in which he finds himself. Indeed, many types of language interaction can take place anywhere at all and under any conditions. The speaker's choice plays a large part in any utterance. The participant wishing to report an event or describe an incident or condition will use ideational functions. To express a wish, a certainty, or a probability, modal functions are used. The speaker who is interested in bringing about some action through the language act may choose from a wide range of "communicative functions." Making requests and expressing agreement or disagreement are frequently occurring communicative functions in any situation. The topics, that is, the things that the functions are used to talk or write about, are referred to by Wilkins as the "notions."[10]

The participant also has a choice of lexical items, intonation and style. This choice is, to some extent, determined by the reference and the situation in general. However, the choice of grammatical forms, as well as of the functions and notions, is also determined to a great extent by the participant's aims.

It is noted by the authors of *Un Niveau Seuil*[11] that another factor which may affect the choice of sentence structure and lexical items in particular is the order of the language act. Whether the utterance is an opening remark (order 1) or a reply (order 2) often determines what is said. Consider, for instance, two ways in which a speaker may give another person permission to leave:

Order 1 - "You may leave" (permission was not asked).
Order 2 - "Yes, you may" (permission was asked as in "May I leave now?").

Three Types of Meaning

Wilkins refers to three types of meaning that can be conveyed in the uttering of a sentence:

(i) IDEATIONAL MEANING which is used to report and to express perceptions of events, processes,

[10]Wilkins, *op. cit.*, p.18.

[11]Coste, *op. cit.*, p.88.

states and abstractions through the application of the grammatical system of the language used;

(ii) MODAL MEANING which is used to express the degree of validity of a statement;

(iii) COMMUNICATIVE MEANING which concentrates on the social purpose of the utterance.

While the precise meanings and the forms used to express them vary between languages, similar types and distinctions of meanings are used in many different languages. The categories for all three types of meaning, as given by Wilkins,[12] are shown in Figure 2.

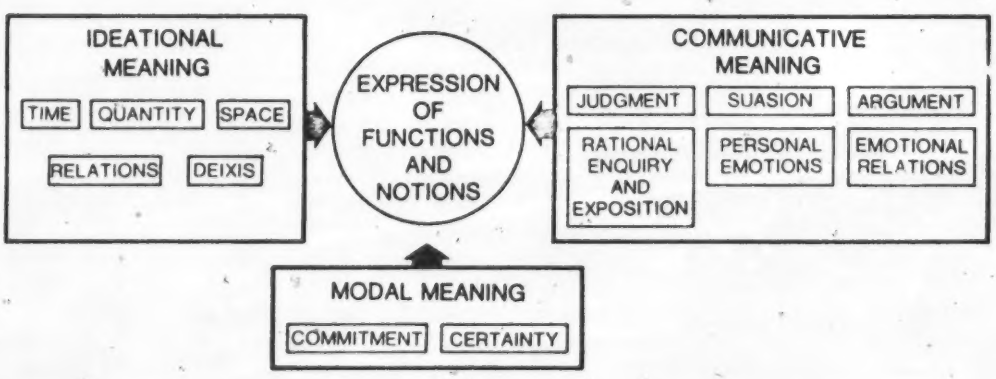
Ideational Meaning

Included in the ideational category are functions related to what is generally referred to as grammar. Jakobson, in an earlier classification of language functions, called these functions "denotative" because they are used to relate facts and situational or textual references.[13] The characteristic of this category is the use of the third person subject or object. This category is well represented in the textbooks used to teach languages. The grammar notes and exercises they contain explain

Figure 2

COMPONENTS OF A LANGUAGE ACT

MEANING



[12] Wilkins, *op. cit.*, pp.25-54.

[13] R. Jakobson, *Essais de linguistique générale* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1963).

various ways of expressing time (tenses, prepositions) and of relating one event to another. No textbook is complete without exercises on ways to express quantity (articles, numerals), space (dimensions and motion), and sentence structure (ways to modify sentences to stress the subject, object or predicate). It is through these functions that we can ask and answer such questions as: "Who is doing what?", "To whom?", "With what intention?", "By what means?", and "With what results?". With experience of language use in a variety of situations, speakers of a language learn "deixis": the capacity to relate an utterance or a particular work to its context. In the sentence "I've looked through it and it bothers me that I'm not mentioned.", the pronoun "it" has two different references. In the context we would understand them without requiring further explanation.

Modal Meaning

Modal functions are used to express degrees of certainty and uncertainty ("Yes, I know that is his address") as well as their counterparts: probability and possibility ("They should arrive on time"). Included are the modal verbs (for example, "to be able", "to have to") and other expressions of conjecture, belief or doubt ("I suppose/I don't think they will win"), as well as those expressions signifying commitment ("See you tomorrow at six").

Communicative Meaning

The distinction between communicative meaning and ideational and modal meaning is a key to understanding the way in which we use language in order to achieve our aims. For language teachers this understanding may be most helpful in assisting our students to do what they want with a language in social communication.

In teaching and learning modern languages, more emphasis is usually placed on the ideational and modal functions than on the communicative functions. Students have learned to report and describe. They have learned to use the third person rather than the first person that is required by the communicative functions. And it is the communicative functions we use to affect other participants and to get things done.

Austin, whose analysis of the language act in *How to Do Things With Words*[14] forms the basis for Wilkins' proposals,

[14]J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

uses the marriage vow "I do" as a clear example of the difference between fundamentally different types of language acts. When a person who is being married says "I do" in the course of the ceremony, an obligation is automatically assumed. The utterance seems to constitute the act itself. Austin calls this type of non-negotiable speech act "performative." The negotiable, descriptive speech acts such as "I am getting married," Austin calls "constative." People making or receiving offers of marriage or signing contracts quickly learn to tell the difference between the two types of speech act. However, as Wilkins points out, "the use of the relevant noun or a performative verb is often limited to more formal occasions."[15]

We usually have to rely on the context, our knowledge of the speaker's "track record" or our own degree of trust in the other person's sincerity before deciding whether a speech act is performative or constative. It may not be too difficult to determine that, "Now tell me, Jim, how are you feeling today?", asked by a friend who has concern written all over his face, is performative, whereas "How are you today?" asked by your neighbour on his way to work is constative. Your friend merits a blow-by-blow account of your ailments; your neighbour a cheery "Fine, thanks; and yourself?" On the other hand, whether "I am sorry" is a performative or a constative statement is only to be decided in the light of the context and the character of the speaker.

It is in the category of communicative meaning, then, that we find the functions we use to affect most directly the behaviour of others (suasion) and to express our judgements and evaluations of people, things and events. Also included are utterances that we use to exchange information, to agree and disagree, to explain our thoughts, and to draw deductions or implications from the explanations of others. Above all, this category contains functions that we all too often ignore in our language classes: the expression of such emotions as delight, annoyance, sympathy, thankfulness or hostility. How many misunderstandings between strangers and the natives of a country might have been avoided if the foreigners had only been able to express feelings and get things done through speech instead of resorting to signs or silent frustration?

Communicative Meaning in the Classroom

Despite what some behaviorists may lead us to believe, people are unpredictable. Even if all the options open to the

[15] Wilkins, *op. cit.*, p.43.

participants in a language act were to be analyzed and related to each other, it would still not be possible to predict what a speaker would say in any given situation. Even in "closed" transactions, the elements that determine the choice of meaning and vocabulary are subject in large measure to the peculiar interpretation of each participant.

This rich complexity has to be controlled in some way if each learner of a modern language in the classroom is to have the opportunity to make use of the structures and vocabulary already acquired. The limitations placed on the situations presented should, however, allow the learner the maximum choice of free expression within the scope of the language he has already acquired.

Given the complexities of the situational constraints bearing on any given language act, it may be asked which elements can most advantageously be controlled in order to induce learners of a modern language to use effectively all three types of meaning.

Richterich selects the following elements of situations that may be developed to stimulate students' use of functional meaning: location, time and events, reference, means, degree of acquaintance and status.[16] These elements are at the more predictable end of the spectrum and feature usually in "closed" transactions. The emphasis placed by Richterich on the role of the participants as initiator or addressee in the language act (that is, the use of the first person subject pronoun) is most important. As Wilkins has stated, "the fact that we can report does not mean that we know how to get things done."[17] An individual is not as likely to make someone leave the room by saying, "I order you to leave the room" as by yelling, "Get out!"

Richterich shows how a combination of sequences of the speech acts and elements of the situation can be used within the framework of specific pedagogical goals, such as developing the students' listening comprehension, reading, speaking and writing skills. Various styles of instruction such as the

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[16]R. Richterich, "Essais d'application d'un cache de référence pragmatique à la réalisation de matériels d'apprentissage du français étranger," *Bulletin de la CILA*, No. 24 (Neuchâtel, 1976). Reprinted in *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (May 1977), pp.681-693.

[17]Wilkins, *op. cit.*, p.40.

teacher working with one student, groups of students working together and the teacher working with a large group may also be used.

An example of such a model conversational exchange involves students carrying out a task. In order to do this, they must request further information or a clarification of the order. The teacher asks different students in turn to carry out an order and is careful to use speech too quickly or incomprehensibly, or gives an order that is impossible to carry out:

Teacher: - Mademoiselle, ouvrez la "nefstra," s'il vous plaît.
Student: - Est-ce que vous pourriez répéter le dernier mot? Je n'ai pas bien compris.

Such an exchange involves the use of suasion (command) and enquiry (request for clarification). In addition, the participants are involved as initiator and addressee. The location provides an immediate reference for the language act (when repeating the mispronounced word, the speaker may point to the window). The time has no apparent influence on the choice of language; the sequence of events is predictable. If the initiator pronounces the word more clearly, the order will be carried out. However, the order may not be carried out because of a refusal or continued misunderstanding. The means of expression is direct speech, the reference is present, the status of the speakers is "known," the need of the initiator is physical, and that of the addressee is intellectual (the need to know what is meant).

If a greater degree of realism is to be introduced into the language acts used in the classroom, they must reflect the dynamic nature of communication and, in particular, the speaker's ability to react to the unpredictable through the use of a feedback mechanism.

Johnson and Morrow describe how they introduce systematically the element of unpredictability into the simulations that are part of a course they have designed at the Centre for Applied Language Studies of the University of Reading, England.[18] The purpose of their course is to teach social language (greetings, introductions, naming, leaving, thanking, excusing, etc.).

Functions tend to cluster together in fairly predictable ways when used in closed transactions: "...an expression of an

[18]K. Johnson and K. Morrow, "Meeting Some Social Language Needs of Overseas Students," *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (May, 1977), pp.694-707.

invitation might lead to an acceptance, followed by the making of arrangements and the expression of thanks."[19] Richterich attempts to close the transactions by concentrating on a limited number of socio-cultural aspects of the situation. He thus builds into the exchanges a greater degree of predictable behaviour and semantic use. Johnson and Morrow, by basing situations on the psycholinguistic aspects, attempt to develop their students' awareness of both language functions and of the effect of the situation on the choice of form and grammar.

It is apparent that the feedback mechanism functions when the speaker knows, before participating in the language act, both what his needs are and who is to be the likely beneficiary of the language act. The gradual revelation of information in the total situation interacts with these anticipated outcomes to guide the selection of utterances.

Ways of introducing these unpredictable subsidiary situations into the classroom situations are described by Johnson and Morrow. In one example, a person playing the role of a ticket clerk is required to phone a superior in order to obtain information. In a simulation in which "A" asks "B" for information about train times, the ultimate beneficiary can be clearly determined and the use of feedback mechanism ensured if "A" is told that he has an appointment in another city at a certain time. It will take him one hour to reach the station. "A" not only has to ask about train times, but also has to listen to what is said to him and make the necessary arrangements to suit his aims.[20]

Another technique that allows students of another language to integrate all their language skills and participate in language acts involving both closed and open types of transactions has been used to good effect by the author.[21] For each situation to be practised a brief list of useful notions and functions is presented to the students. This list may be compiled by consulting the contents of the language text that the students have already learned as well as the examples of functions and notions given in the works of the Council of Europe previously mentioned.

When students have understood how the words and expressions

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[19]Johnson and Morrow, *op. cit.*, p.696.

[20]Johnson and Morrow, *op. cit.*, p.703.

[21]Robert J. Pietro, "Speech Protocols and Verbal Strategies in the Teaching of Italian," in *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, Vol.32, No.1,(October 1975), pp.24-38.

in the list might be used and what their meaning is, they receive a plan of a possible conversation and select a role to play in the situation. The possible questions, statements and rejoinders are briefly described in the plan. It is up to the students during their conversations to change these descriptions into actual utterances. An example of such a list and a suggested situation involving the return of unsatisfactory goods in a store are shown in Figures 3 and 4. An element of unpredictability is introduced since there is often more than one suggested utterance for each occasion when a participant speaks. The proposed exchanges can be made more complex or simple by changing the number of suggested utterances made by each speaker.

The roles in situations of this type may be played by students at all levels. They enjoy the challenge of adapting their language skills to obtain a satisfactory solution to problems presented. Before long the students will want to invent similar simulations in order to enact situations based on their own experiences. They will appreciate that practising language acts in the classroom can be a very effective preparation for use of the target language in real situations. Participation in exchanges of this kind that satisfy in a direct way the language needs of the students is, in itself, a very worthwhile objective for the teacher as well as the students.

Figure 3

LE CLIENT A TOUJOURS RAISON?
MOTS ET EXPRESSIONS UTILES:

CRITIQUER

- Je pense/crois/trouve que...
- Ce n'est pas fameux/ convaincant.
- A mon avis/sens.
- Oui, mais...
- Ca laisse à désirer; c'est contestable.
- Regardez, ce jouet ne marche pas.

ACCUSER

- C'est vous/lui/elle qui...
- En principe.
- De toute façon; au contraire.

DESAPPROUVER

- De quel droit / Comment / Qui / Qu'est-ce qui } osez-vous...? vous permet de...?
- Je proteste; J'exige réparation.
- Ce n'est pas à quoi je m'attendais.
- Je ne suis pas du tout satisfait.
  Absolument pas; en aucun cas.

IRRITATION

- C'est insupportable/intolérable/ scandaleux/inadmissible!

- J'en ai marre!
- Ca suffit!

REFUTER

- C'est interdit/impossible.
- Ce n'est pas vrai.
- Vous vous trompez.
- Je vous assure que...

REMBOURSER

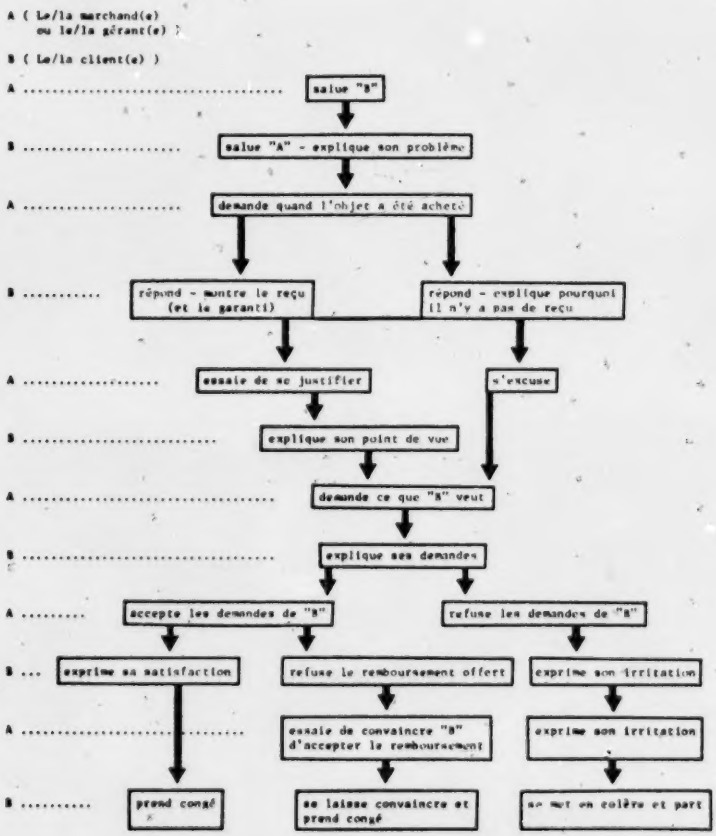
- Pour qui me prenez-vous?
- Je ne suis pas à vendre.
- Ca ne m'intéresse pas.
- Ou bien vous me l'échangez ou bien vous me le remboursez.

LES EXCUSES

- J'attends vos excuses.
- J'exige des excuses.
- (Je vous demande) pardon.
- Je vous en prie.
- Il n'y a pas de mal; Ce n'est rien.
- Merci; il n'y a pas de quoi.

Figure 4

LE CLIENT A TOUJOURS RAISON? PLAN DE CONVERSATION


A (Le/la marchand(e) ou le/la gérant(e))
B (Le/la client(e))
A ..... salue "B"
B ..... salue "A" - explique son problème
A ..... demande quand l'objet a été acheté
B ..... répond - montre le reçu (et le garanti)
répond - explique pourquoi il n'y a pas de reçu
A ..... essaie de se justifier
s'excuse
B ..... explique son point de vue
A ..... demande ce que "B" veut
B ..... explique ses demandes
A ..... accepte les demandes de "B"
refuse les demandes de "B"
B ... exprime sa satisfaction
refuse le remboursement offert
exprime son irritation
A ..... essaie de convaincre "B" d'accepter le remboursement
exprime son irritation
B ..... prend congé
se laisse convaincre et prend congé
se met en colère et part